

## Merging Principles in Family Tree

### MERGING DUPLICATE PEOPLE IN FAMILY TREE

The FamilySearch Family Tree contains many duplicate individuals. Some data may pertain to the same person and should be merged. Other data may pertain to a person with a similar name but represents an entirely different person. These should NOT be merged and need to be marked as **Not a Match**.

Before merging records, consider the following:

- Review family relationships, reason statements, sources, and discussions on the person's page.
- Know what pieces of information are already well documented and explained.
- Keep notes as you work through the merging process.
- If possible, refer to a well-documented genealogical database, book, or other resource.

### POSSIBLE DUPLICATES

The system will display the number of **Possible Duplicates** under the **Tools** menu on the right side of the person page. This is also displayed under **Research Help**.

If the system does not find a duplicate, but you know there is one, copy the ID number of the person you wish to merge and use the **Merge By ID** feature.

Clicking either of these will bring up the merging duplicates screen.

### MERGE BY ID

Enter or paste the ID number of the possible duplicate person into the box.

The system will then compare the two names side by side in the same way it does if it did find a duplicate.



#### Merge By ID



**⚠** Merging is a complex process in which you decide if two people are the same person. If they are, you choose which information should be kept. Please take the time necessary to carefully review each possible duplicate.

Current Person ID

 Frank Waugh  
1905-Deceased • BMM8-GD2

Possible Duplicate ID

Enter a Person ID

Continue

## REVIEW MERGE

The screenshot displays a family tree interface with three main panels. The left panel shows a profile for **Frank Waugh** (1905-Deceased • BMM8-GD2) with an "Add Spouse" button and a "Children" dropdown. The middle panel shows a family group starting with **John Waugh** (1876-1912 • BMM8-PZJ) and **Clara Rolley** (1878-1927 • BMM8-PZF), listing their 10 children: Geneveve Waugh, Jennie Waugh, Stella Waugh, W. S. Waugh, Estella Waugh, **Frank Waugh** (1905-Deceased • BMM8-GD2), and another Frank Waugh (1906-Deceased • BMM8-L5K). The right panel shows a "Tools" menu with options like "Edit Labels", "Possible Duplicates" (highlighted with a red box and a red arrow), "Find Similar People", "Merge By ID", "Report Abuse", and "Delete Person Unavailable".

This section shows a detailed profile for **Frank Waugh** (1906-Deceased • BMM8-L5K). It includes a "Show More" link, a "Birth" date of 1906, a "Death" status of Deceased, a "Spouse" field, and a "Parents" section listing Jonnie Waugh and Clara Rolley.

The screenshot shows the "Data Problems" section with a red header. It lists two issues: "Missing Standardized Birth Date" and "Possible Duplicate". The "Possible Duplicate" entry is highlighted with a red box and a red arrow. It shows a comparison between **Frank Waugh • BMM8-GD2** and **Frank Waugh • BMM8-L5K**. The birth date for the duplicate is listed as 6 January 1905, Meridian, Lauderdale, Mississippi, United States. The parents are listed as John Waugh and Clara Rolley. To the right of the duplicate entry are two buttons: "Review Merge" and "Not a Match".

If you are certain that the possible duplicate found by the system is NOT the same person, click on **Not a Match**.


Otherwise, click on **Review Merge** to see the two names compared side by side.


The two names are displayed side by side. During the merging process, the name on the right will merge into the name on the left and the name on the right side will be archived.


As you compare the two names, you want the best data to be on the left side. You simply click **Replace** to move data from the right to the left. (Note that you can **Switch Positions** of the people at the top of the screen.) Simply ignoring the right side item is the same as clicking **Reject**. If you move information by mistake, you can click **Undo**.

At the bottom of the screen you can **Continue Merge**, mark **Not A Match**, or **Cancel**.

### Merge Persons

**Frank Waugh**  
BMMB-L5K  
1906 – Deceased

 Switch Positions

**Frank Waugh**  
BMM8-GD2  
6 January 1905 – Deceased

Life Sketch | Vitals | Other | Family | Sources

Frank Waugh and information remaining in this column are deleted at the end of the merge process.

Life Sketch

Vital Information

Open Details

Name

Birth Name

Frank Waugh

Sex

Male

Birth

1906

Death

Deceased

Other Information

Open Details

Family

Parents — John Waugh and Clara Rolley

Open Details

John Waugh

1876-1912 • BMM8-PZJ

Clara Rolley

1878-1927 • BMM8-PZF

Parents — Jonnie Waugh and Clara Rolley

Open Details

Jonnie Waugh

1876-1912 • BMMB-N38

Clara Rolley

1878-1927 • BMM8-PZF

Sources

Name

Birth Name

Frank Waugh

Sex

Male

Birth

6 January 1905  
Meridian, Lauderdale, Mississippi, United States

Death

Deceased

John Waugh

1876-1912 • BMM8-PZJ

Clara Rolley

1878-1927 • BMM8-PZF

Continue Merge

Not A Match

Cancel

If the duplicate person (on the right) has spouses, children, or parents that are the same as the person on the left, BUT THEY HAVE DIFFERENT ID NUMBERS, then they are also likely duplicates and will need to be merged also. Move their names and information to the person on the left or they will be unconnected in the system.

Following the merge, you will then need to compare and merge those people as needed.

When a merge is completed, the system asks you to complete a [Reason Statement](#) explaining why you performed the merge.

There is more information about Reason Statements in the [Help Center](#).

Merging history will be added to the [Latest Changes](#).

## UNDOING A MERGE

If two individuals were merged incorrectly, It is possible to undo the merge.

Go to [Latest Changes](#) on the right side of the person page. Click on [Show All](#).

After opening the [Show All](#), if no changes have been made since the merge occurred, the merge can be undone by clicking [Unmerge](#).

If changes have been made to the person's information, you must restore the archived person. The Unmerge option is not available.

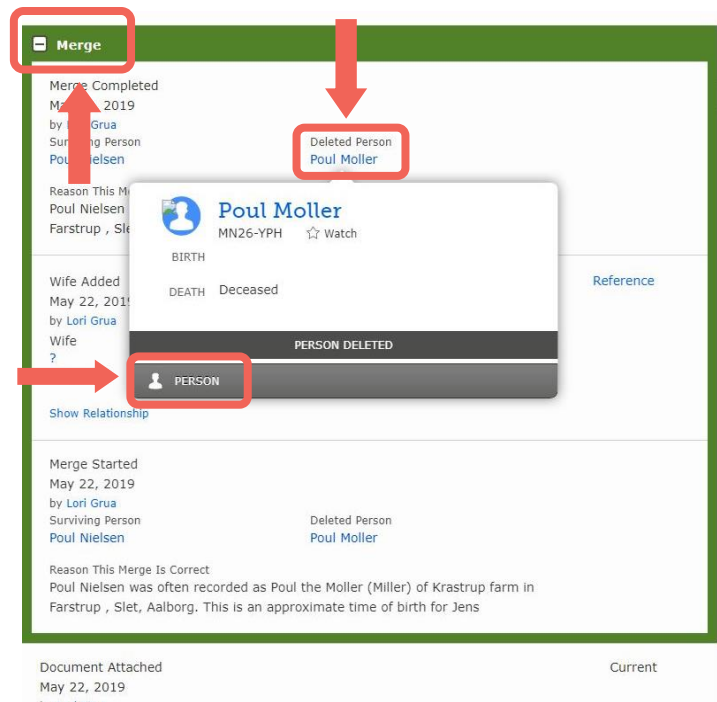


## RESTORE AN ARCHIVED PERSON BY ID NUMBER

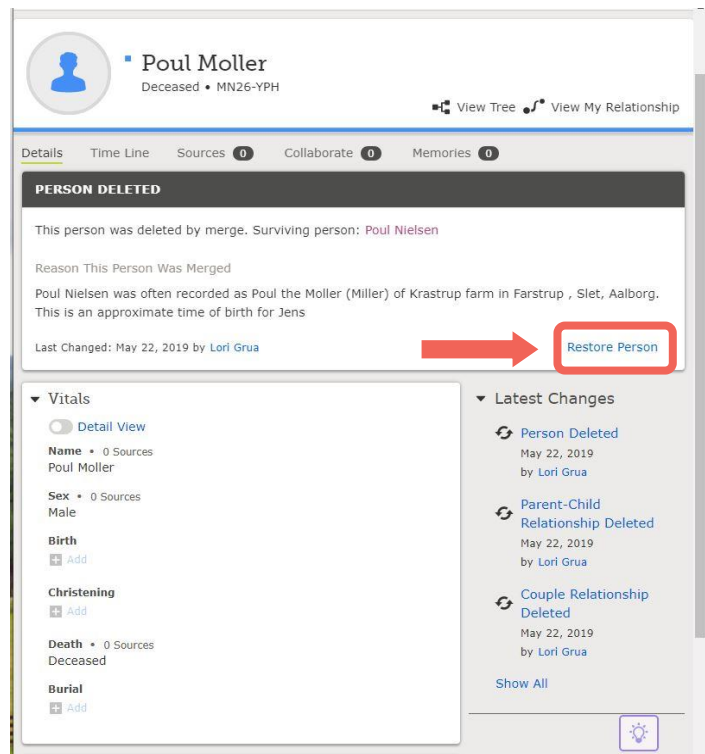
- While signed in to FamilySearch.org, hover your cursor over [Family Tree](#), and click [Find](#).
- Click [Find by ID](#).
- Enter the ID of the deleted person and click [Find](#).
- Click the name of the person.
- On the summary card, click [Person](#).
- In the Person Deleted box, review the reason for the deletion, and then click [Restore Person](#).

## RESTORE THE DELETED PERSON

- Open [Show All](#) under Latest Changes.
- Look for the green box titled [Merge](#).
- Click on the name under the [Deleted Person](#). The summary card opens.
- Click on the person's name again. The option to [Restore Person](#) appears. Review the reason for the deletion.
- Click [Restore Person](#) and include a [Reason Statement](#), explaining why you are restoring this individual.



Note: Restoring is not the same as unmerging. When you restore an archived person, the surviving person does not revert back to what it was before the merge, but retains the added relationships, data, sources, memories, etc.



## INDIVIDUALS THAT CANNOT BE MERGED

- The gender of one person is male and the gender of the other person is female.
- The data indicates the person is alive and the other is deceased.
- Both people in the database were created from membership records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- One of the people has restrictions that would prevent it from being changed.
- If FamilySearch identifies possible duplicates that cannot be merged, a message appears beneath the possible duplicates indicating these persons cannot be merged.

## POSSIBLE DUPLICATE AND MERGING TIPS

- Before starting a merge, know what information is correct. If possible, have documents to support the data.
- The person on the left is the primary person. This person (and ID number) will remain. The person on the right will be archived (or deleted) after a merge.
- If you're not sure of dates or relationships, CANCEL THE MERGE and DO RESEARCH! Do not assume. When in doubt, do not merge.
- Be sure to check attached sources.
- View the relationships that are connected with the individuals you are considering for merging. (You may also want to compare with relationships in other trees such as Ancestry.com).
- Be careful when merging and only merge individuals that you know are duplicates. If there are no dates or places to identify the person, he or she is probably not a duplicate and should not be merged.
- Within a family, resolve duplicate parents before resolving duplicate spouses and children.
- The **Possible Duplicates** tool may not find any duplicates. You may then need to use the **Merge by ID** feature.
- To make sure there are no duplicates, click on the **Find** button at the top of the page and do a manual search. If a duplicate appears, copy the ID number, go back to the Possible Duplicates tool and choose **Merge by ID**. Type in the ID number and click **Continue**. That duplicate record will appear, ready to be merged.